

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9, 11-13, 19 and 24-30 are presently active. Claim 28 is withdrawn from consideration.

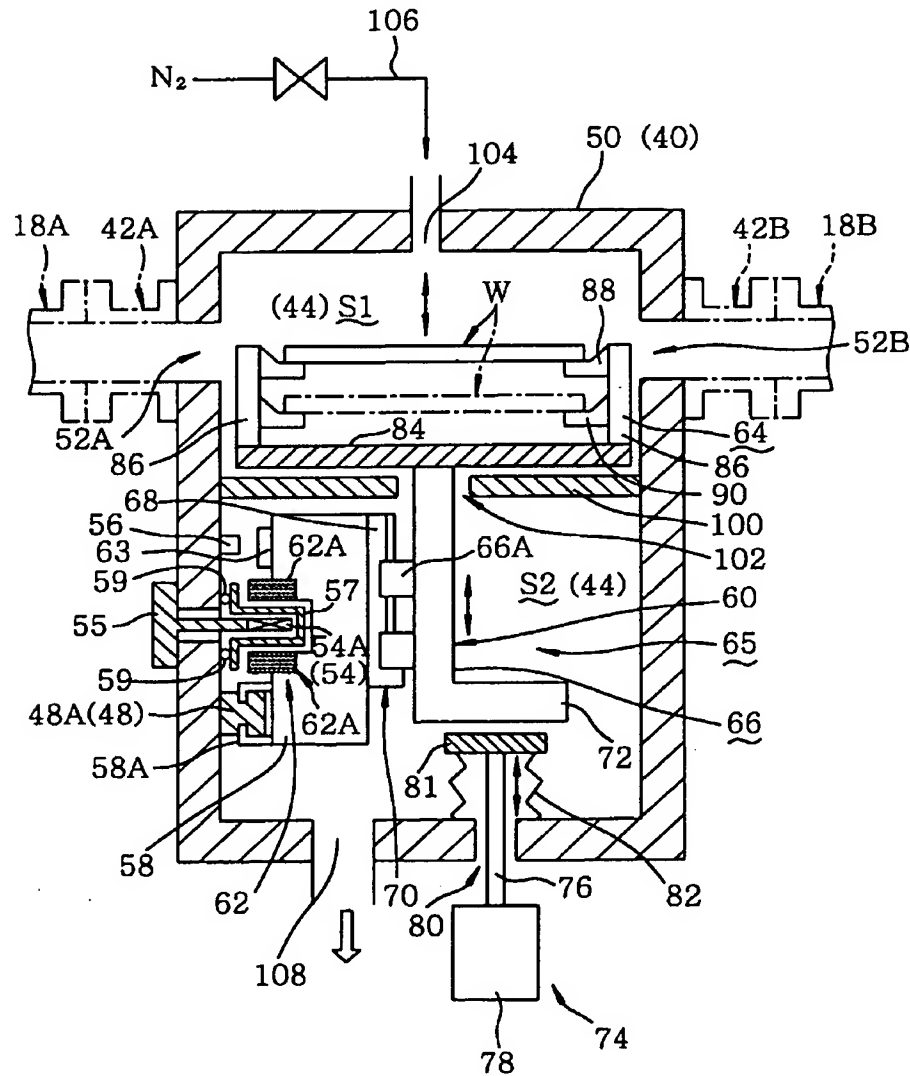
In the Office Action, Claims 24 and 29-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,981,408 to Hughes et al in view of Japanese Patent No. 6100164 to Kitsunai et al and in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,091,217 to Hey et al; Claims 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hughes et al and Kitsunai et al and Hey et al and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,417,537 to Miller; and Claims 1-9, 11-13, and 19 were indicated as being allowed.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowance for Claims 1-9, 11-13, and 19.

Claim Summary: Claim 24 defines:

A transfer mechanism for transferring a disk shaped object to be processed, comprising:
a common transfer chamber under a vacuum state, wherein transfer ports are disposed in a longitudinal direction of the common transfer chamber;
a guide rail installed in the longitudinal direction of the common transfer chamber;
a moving body movable along the guide rail;
an object holding member, vertically movably installed to the moving body, and having a holding part for holding the object and a supporting part for supporting the holding part; and
mechanisms for raising and lowering the object holding member, wherein the raising and lowering mechanisms are installed apart from each other at positions corresponding to the transfer ports,
wherein the common transfer chamber is divided into an upper space and a lower space by a partition wall which has a ***guide slit allowing horizontal movement of the supporting part***, and
the guide slit allows a gas to flow from the upper space to the lower space therethrough. [Emphasis added.]

Applicants' Figure 3 (reproduced below) shows by way of slit 102 one illustration of the claimed guide slit. Applicants describe in numbered paragraph [0066] of the published application that slit 102 allows for a horizontal and vertical movement of supporting member 66.



Art Deficiencies: The Office Action acknowledges that Hughes et al and Kitsunai et al fail to disclose or suggest a guide slit that allows gas to flow from the upper space to the

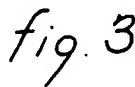
lower space therethrough. See page 4 of the Office Action. The Office Action applied Hey et al in an attempt to overcome the deficiencies in Hughes et al and Kitsunai et al.

Specifically, with regard to the claimed guide slits, the Examiner takes the position that:

Hey et. al. teach the provision of a partition wall (Figure 3, 62) with guide slits 60 that allow for a gas to flow from an upper space of a chamber to a lower space of a chamber for the purpose of providing a substantial control of the flow path of the gas and for the purpose of providing parameters controlling the flow path which strongly discourage incidental and spurious flow within the chamber (column 7, row 52 through column 8, row 16).

Yet, Hey et al show in Figure 3 (reproduced below on the next page) that aperture 60 is part of a close fitting assembly which, in no way, permits horizontal movement of susceptor 30. Moreover, seal 222 on collar 226 surrounding sealing shaft 58) seals so as to maintain “the interior of reactor 10 at its operating pressure.” This seal/collar configuration is not capable of horizontal movement, and indeed is intended **only for vertical manipulation** by stanchions 210 and adjustment/lock means 212.

Thus, any modification of Hey et al’s guide slit 60 to make guide slit 60 to be a guide slit which allows horizontal movement of the supporting part would render Hey et al’s guide slit 60 unsatisfactory for its intended purpose and thus non-obvious. See M.P.E.P. § 2143.01 V.



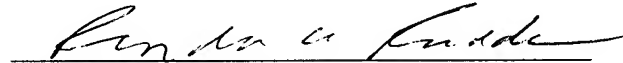
Since Hey et al neither disclose nor suggest a guide slit which allows horizontal movement of the supporting part and which allows a gas to flow from the upper space to the lower space therethrough, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection under U.S.C 103(a) be withdrawn and that Claim 24 be passed to allowance along with dependent Claims 25-30, as well as withdrawn dependent Claim 28 which should be rejoined.

Application No. 10/500,102
Reply to Office Action of February 25, 2009

In light of the above discussion, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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